Companies as on 1.12.1999. The Oil Marketing Companies appoint Dealers / Distributors for retail outlets and SKO-LDO dealerships / LPG distributorships on the recommendations of the Dealer Selection Boards constituted by the Government. As a large number of locations are pending for the selection of dealers/distributors, Government have recently set up 57 new Dealer Selection Boards and with this the process of selection is on.

The Government lay down guidelines for appointment of Dealers / Distributors of petroleum products by Oil Marketing Companies on merit for making available petroleum products to the consumers. Interests of various categories *viz.* persons belonging to SC/ST, women, freedom fighters, defence personnel, outstanding sportsperson, physically handicapped, paramilitary / police / government personnel have been kept in view by providing reservation for them. Government are aware of the deregulated scenario after 31.3.2000.

News-item 'Swadeshi lobby irked over FDI in Refineries'

114. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned Swadeshi lobby irked over FDI in refineries which appeared in the Business Standard (New Delhi), dated 13th June, 2000; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Development of adequate refining capacity in the country is one of the important policy concerns for ensuring oil security in the country which is heavily dependent on imports of crude oil. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is beneficial to the domestic refining industry in terms of augmenting longterm capital inflow into this risky business, access to modern technology for improving refining efficiency. Further, the expectation is that such a measure would augment existing sources of crude supply.

Review of performance of petroleum sector

115. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reviewed the performance of petroleum